

“A New Day”

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I have a confession to make: I like watching “Downton Abbey” on TV. It’s not an easy thing to admit in public, I was a little afraid because, when I first saw it with Jill, I was being a good husband. I thought it was going to be a cross between “Little Women” and “Pride and Prejudice,” and that somebody was going to take my “man card” away from me. But I ended up really liking it.

One of the reasons I like it is because, well, let me tell you first: It starts out - for those of you who have not become addicted - right before World War 1 in England. It’s about this amazing, aristocratic castle with all of these interesting people. But, it isn’t only a story about the aristocrats - the Crowley family - it’s also about the servants that live below, and all of the inter-workings of the situations in their lives. Something happens in World War 1 and then, all of a sudden, all bets are off. Change is taking place. Then after the war life doesn’t quite go back to the way it was; and I like it, I think, because you are watching how these characters - both the wealthy and the servants - deal with the amazing change that is taking place, upsetting the world in which they live.

I love it because it teaches us how we deal with change. We see ourselves in the characters; we wonder if we are the ones not handling the change real well - whether we are the one looking forward to it. It is just so interesting.

In the passage of Scripture that we read today - or that Gary did the hard part for - again it’s about people’s inability to handle change. All of a sudden you have the Crucifixion - there was change, the Apostles were frightened, they were scared to death. Everything they thought about their religion had been taken away from them.

Then there was this odd resurrection empty tomb moment and a resurrection. But what did that have to do with them? Did Jesus leave them? You would think when Jesus went up to Heaven they would go, “Man, this religion is for real!” But they didn’t, they couldn’t handle all of the change. They were scared to death that they were going to be left there to their own devices. So they sat huddled around on a Jewish holiday, which was the Festival of Harvest - which is what Pentecost is - or started out being.

Then, suddenly as they huddled together for protection in the midst of their fear and their doubt, the Spirit of God transformed them. They began speaking in the different languages of all of the people from all over the world who had gathered for the Pentecost: the Harvest Festival. They started speaking each in the different languages. How could they do it? These simple men from Galilee were speaking all of these different languages and people didn’t like it.

So what happens when people are uncomfortable or they make change? They make fun of it, because they don’t know how else to handle it. And Peter who had just denied Jesus three times, got up and - it wasn’t that he spoke a different language, but God, through the Holy Spirit, gave them the wisdom of utterance: that’s what he [Peter] said when the Spirit filled him became truth. With the entire Scripture before him, he quoted Joel the